

Greek Workers in the Intermountain West: The Early Twentieth Century*

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The Greeks were among many national and racial groups to inundate the Intermountain West at the turn of the century and in many parts of it were the largest group of workers. Payrolls and newspaper reports, the many self-sufficient 'Greek Towns,' large chapters of Panhellenic Unions, and the early establishment of Greek Orthodox churches give us cause to believe that the 1910 Census represented only a portion of Greek immigrants.¹ The men were constantly moving and census-taking was haphazard.

Besides their numerical superiority in many mines, mills, and railroad gangs, the Greeks had an even sharper distinctiveness than other new immigrants of the same period. They (and the Japanese) were the most nationalistic and among the most family oriented. Revolt, nationalism, and redeeming of lands lost to the Turks were entwined themes of life for them; and the will of the family traversed the thousands of miles separating them from the *patridha* (fatherland). The long epoch of Turkish rule had tightened the extended family unit, the *soi* (clan); to survive under Moslem control and the debilitating poverty of

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1. 1910 Census: Utah 4,039 Greeks; Idaho 1,869; Wyoming 1,915; Nevada 1,060; Montana 1,934. 1910 reflected the first significant immigration figures.

the country, the family ruled its members with unyielding control. The first law of life was the family's survival, and, whenever possible, survival with *filotimo*, honour. To provide dowries for sisters and help for parents, men and boys left for the new land of riches.

The Intermountain Greeks began arriving when the opening of coal and metal mines and the clearing of sagebrush under homestead laws required railroad extensions that veined the West. With this rapid industrialization, a few adventurous Greeks left established Greek Towns in New York and Chicago, made pacts with mine and railroad management, trading the promise of cheap labour for privilege, and tenaciously became the leading labour suppliers of the West. Within a few years of the new century, Greeks flocked to mines, mills, smelters, railroad camps, and towns that dotted the arid expanses from Montana to New Mexico.

The immigrants lived in crowded Greek neighbourhoods made up of shanties, boardinghouses, coffeehouses, bakeries, and grocery stores selling imported olive oil, *feta* cheese, dried *bakhalaro* (codfish) and *octopi*, Turkish coffee, figs, liqueurs, and *loukoumi* sweets. The Towns were sanctuaries for the Greeks in an alien land that needed their labour but, fearing their inroads into American life, decried their 'racial inferiority' and their 'unassimilability'.² To them the immigrants travelled when hungry, when looking for work, and when, after clearing a plain of sagebrush in Idaho, they were routed out of their tents by masked men with guns and whips. To the nearest Greek Towns they fled when Americans rioted in Omaha and burned the Greek section of the city and when in Nevada they protested the untended injuries of one of their labour gang and penniless walked through more than two hundred miles of sage and salt desert.³ To them they flocked to blunt their exile in this *xenetia*,

2. See O. Handlin, *Race and Nationality in American Life* (New York, 1957), pp. 77–8; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860–1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), chaps. 8–11; H. P. Fairchild, *Greek Immigration to the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), was a leading proponent of nativist notions on the inferiority of Greeks.

3. T. Burgess, *Greeks in America* (Boston, 1913), pp. 165–7; T. Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 62, 66–9; J. G. Bitzes, 'The Anti-Greek Riot of 1909 – South Omaha,' *Nebraska*

this foreign land. Among their own people, singing and dancing in remembrance of their folk heroes, watching the *Karaghiozi* shadow puppets in coffeehouses where basil plants grew in rusty tin cans, eating their own foods, listening to scratchy Greek phonograph records and peripatetic musicians with *lyras*, *laoutos*, and clarinets, they were, without knowing it, already beginning to accommodate themselves to American life.

Later, when the first Greek picture brides began arriving, hardly any escaped running a boardinghouse or having their husbands' brothers and cousins living in their houses, while they raised large families, washed clothes by hand, baked bread in outside earth ovens, grew vegetables, and canned fruit. Working harder than they had in their villages where women in the extended families gave help and support, young wives coped alone with the demands of a patriarchal society transplanted to the new country. There were women among them, however, who welcomed the opportunity to make money for their families' security and competed, even feuded, for boarders. In Pocatello, Idaho, women filed court suits against each other charging pirating of boarders.⁴

Yet there were never enough women to provide board and room for the thousands of labourers coming into the country. There were also men who preferred to crowd together and cook for themselves to save money. These immigrants lived in tents and powder-box shacks outside which water for drinking and sewage streams ran side by side. A Cretan woman, who arrived in southern Colorado's mining district in 1911 and later lived in many Utah coal towns, recalled:

When the men brought me their clothes to wash on their way to work, I had them drop them by the fence, then I would lift them up with a long stick and drop them into a tub of water boiling over a fire in the yard – because they were crawling with lice.⁵

History, LI (1970), 199–224; Helen Zeese Papanikolas, *Toil and Rage in a New Land: The Greek Immigrants in Utah*, 2nd ed. rev., reprinted from *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1970); Louis Lingos autobiographical sketch, Greek Archives, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

4. Reminiscences of Emily and George Zeese, and Mrs. Nick Poulos.

5. Interview with Mrs. Pete Georgelas, 8 September 1974.

Management built boardinghouses over the years, but they were incommensurate with the need. The 1910 Dillingham reports of the Immigrant Commission said of company quarters provided by the mineral industry:

For 'white men' without families the company maintains a dormitory for which the charge for each man is \$1 per month. The service rendered includes the supply of bedding and laundering of bedding and towels. For the Greeks and the Japanese [the lowest paid workers] the company furnishes bunk houses with running water for the price charged 'white men' at the dormitory, but covers neither bedding and laundry. . . . The Greeks and Japanese are segregated from other employees. . . . The segregation is partly the result of the difference in the standard of comfort demanded by 'American' laborers . . . and partly by the habit—more or less imposed by the prejudices of 'American' laborers—these laborers have of living by themselves.⁶

Both management and Americans in general thought of immigrants as being content with a low standard of living. Wherever labour gangs were large, workers lived either in 'foreigners' camps' or in 'white men's camps'. The difference in amenities was most noticeable on railroad gangs: American quarters included a separate car for cooking, another for eating, and a third for bunk-bed sleeping; for immigrants one car was used for cooking and eating, with wooden platforms at each end for sleeping. This practice continued after immigrants took over the major industry of laying rails and keeping them in repair.⁷

Paradoxically, immigrants were castigated for their low standard of living over which they had little control and also for their frugality that led to accumulation of real estate properties and establishment of businesses. In the propaganda of the day,

6. *Reports of the Immigration Commission: Immigrants in Industries, Part 25: Japanese and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States*, Vol. III (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1911), p. 202.

7. This discrimination was practised in Mid-West labour gangs also. For a description of a Greek labour camp in Wisconsin, see W. M. Leiserson, *Adjusting Immigrants and Industry* (1924; reprinted ed., *New York Times*, 1969), pp. 71–2.

their low standard of living enabled them to save money that Americans with a higher one could not. A typical comment in a Nevada newspaper said:

The foreign element . . . spends no money other than for the barest necessities of life. They hoard their earnings, spending scarcely 10 per cent with the business men of the community . . . and send most of their savings out of the country. The native born workingman, on the other hand, spends his money for good living, good clothes and for the comforts of life. . . .⁸

During labour troubles newspaper reporting increased its hostility to Greeks and other immigrants for their unsanitary living conditions, ignoring management's irresponsibility of not providing adequate housing. The Western Federation of Miners and the American Federation of Labor railed, unheeded, at the degradation of all miners' living conditions, but the clearest voice was that of a Greek woman journalist. Maria Ekonomidou travelled the West and as far north as Alaska. She wrote, 'I will always remember the brave young Cretans and Roumeliots of Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and Nevada', the greatest number of Greeks in the Intermountain West of the period. She rebuked the Greek government sponsored Panhellenic Unions for exhorting the Greek immigrants to remember the fatherland and to return to it while overlooking their illiteracy and appalling living conditions. She demanded of the Utah Copper Company general manager hospitals and housing for the immigrants. R. C. Gemmell answered her: 'They choose their own habitations and if we built them better ones, they would not live in them.'⁹

The men, with boys from nine to fourteen years of age as water boys, were constantly moving from one railroad gang to another replacing narrow-gauge rails with standard gauge,

8. V. R. Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike: Immigrant Labor in Pennsylvania Anthracite* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp. 118, 120, shows this widespread view at work in the anthracite strike of 1897. *White Pine Daily News* (Ely, Nevada), 28 October 1907.

9. Maria Sarantopoulou Ekonomidou, *Oi Έλληνες τής Αμερικῆς ὅπως τοὺς εἶδα* (New York, 1916), pp. 65, 85.

from mineral mines to coal mines, from mill towns to smelters – always in search of work and better pay. Although railroad roadmasters and mine foremen could at times be approached by immigrants seeking jobs for brothers, cousins, and countrymen, invariably workers had to obtain a note from a labour agent authorizing their employment on a railroad gang or in a mine. The note protected them from vagrancy charges that jailed hungry, anxious immigrants, a traumatic experience, the memory of which remained throughout their lives.

The despot who ruled the labour market and to whom almost every minor Greek agent gave fealty was Leonidas G. Skliris, called the ‘Czar of the Greeks’ by Americans. A native of Sparta, speaking a schooled Greek, Skliris arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1897, and established headquarters near the Denver and Rio Grande Western and Union Pacific railyards. He soon had branch offices in New York, Saint Paul, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, San Francisco, and Sacramento. His choice of Utah for headquarters was propitious.¹⁰ Not only were the largest copper deposits in the world and vast coalfields of a high carbon, low-sulphur bituminous with excellent coking qualities within its borders, but labour had to be imported. The Mormon people who settled Utah had continued their obedience to Brigham Young’s orders to stay on the land and not be seduced by the ‘sinks of pollution’ that came with industrialization.¹¹ While frenetic activity was changing Utah from an agricultural to an industrial state, Mormons remained a rural people.

As the leading labour agent for the Denver and Rio Grande Western, Oregon Short Line, and Union Pacific railroads, their coal company subsidiaries in Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado, and for the Utah Copper Company (later Kennecott) interests in Utah, Skliris advertised in Greek newspapers in the United States, mainland Greece, and Crete, and brought thousands of Greeks to the West. Many came with *foustanellass* (white pleated kilts) in their baggage; far more came directly from Crete, entire

10. For additional details on Skliris, see Helen Z. Papanikolas, ‘The Exiled Greeks’, in Papanikolas, ed., *The Peoples of Utah* (Salt Lake City, 1976). An excellent survey of Greek labour agents in the West is found in L. J. Cononelos, ‘Greek Immigrant Laborers in the Intermountain West: 1900–1920’ (Master’s thesis, University of Utah, 1978), chap. 5.

11. J. C. Alter, *Utah, the Storied Domain*, I (Chicago and New York, 1932), p. 379.

groups of them wearing black breeches with an amulet of Cretan earth sewed inside a square of cloth and pinned to their undershirts. In accordance with the traditional custom of paying for patronage, woven into life under the Byzantines, the conquering Franks, Venetians, and Turks, the young Greeks paid Skliris's lieutenants an initial payment of around twenty dollars. This bribe was a large amount for immigrants who had grown up during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Fleeing the debilitating effects of national bankruptcy and military defeat by the Turks, many of them arrived in the United States during the severe economic depression of 1907. Days of hunger – and work, when available, at fifty cents to a dollar a day – sent them wandering through the hamlets, towns, and cities of America.

Besides the initial payment to labour agents, a monthly dollar, and sometimes two, was exacted from each labourer in return for continued employment; this binding, unending relationship was even more bitterly resented by the immigrants than the paying of the first bribe. There was no escape from this extortion: a large network of men worked to enforce the *padrones'* rule, either fulltime employees or those who combined representing labour agents with owning clothing, grocery, or coal, ice, and feed stores. Minor Greek labour agents waited in coffeehouses on payday for the monthly fee, or had their wives sit on front porches while workers filed by and tossed silver dollars at their feet, but Skliris arranged with mine and railroad companies to deduct the money from the labourers' wages before they were paid.¹² This gave Skliris a grudging prestige in the eyes of the immigrants: he had greater *mesa*, the means of patronage. Bolstering his prestige was wealth. Skliris lived in luxury, occupying a wing of one floor of the newly built Hotel Utah. His extravagances were awesome for the day: to provide a night of entertainment, he brought Greek musicians from New York; and his gifts to mine managers were lavish.

Alongside Greeks riding the freight trains in search of Skliris were Serbians, Christian Albanians, and Lebanese. A document reveals that he and the editor of a Salt Lake City Italian-

12. A copy of Skliris's contract is filed in the American West Center, University of Utah.

language newspaper were also in business partnership.¹³ With his advertisements and agents making the rounds of coffeehouses in New York and in Chicago's Halsted district, Skliris made good his boast to mine and railroad officials that he could supply them with any number of workers at cheaper wages. During labour troubles, he assured them of strike-breakers. The promise of strike-breakers made Skliris of inestimable value to management, beset by the Western Federation of Miners, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the United Mine Workers. The twofold service of labour agents, providing workers and strike-breakers, was so important to management that elected officials, entrenched on the side of industrialists, ignored letters and petitions from Greeks charging extortion.¹⁴

Strikes and strike-breaking were foreign concepts to Greek immigrants. They had not travelled north for seasonal work in Central Europe and come in contact with radical labour views as had North Italians and Yugoslavs. It would take several years of labour indoctrination to teach Greeks that strikes were weapons. First they had to become accustomed to the audacity and the right of labourers to demand better working conditions and higher wages from an employer. All had known a demeaning dependency on the whims of employers and public officials. Yet it was as strike-breakers that the first Greeks in noticeable numbers came to the Intermountain West. Although a railroad gang from Louka in the Peloponnese worked on the Lucin cutoff of the Union Pacific, it was isolated and did not attract much attention. The first sizeable group of Greeks were brought as strike-breakers in a 1903 strike in the Utah coal fields where Italians, who had come into the area at the end of the previous century as strike-breakers, had become strikers as Greeks would in the future. These Greeks were brought directly from mountain villages near Lamia in Central Greece. A human

13. P. F. Notarianni, 'Italianita in Utah', in *Peoples of Utah*, p. 307.

14. Governor's Correspondence, State of Utah, 1911, contains two letters and a petition signed by more than 500 Greeks protesting Skliris's extortion. During the Pocatello, Idaho, railyard strike of 1911, the leading Greek labour agent in Idaho, William Karavelis, was accused by Greek workers of peonage (*Pocatello Tribune*, 3 December 1911); on 8 December, the newspaper reported the charges had been dropped and extolled Karavelis as a 'strong leader of the Greeks'.

element, now forgotten, worked to bring these Roumeliots to break the strike rather than Peloponnesians. Greek *padrones* showed preference for their own villagers and provincials before looking elsewhere.

Thereafter the Greeks came in ever increasing numbers, many straight from Greece as illegal contract workers; some by working westward after being turned away from factories and restaurants glutted with immigrant slave labour; others lured by advertisements in the *patridha*, by talk in village coffeehouses, and by proselytizing of steamship agents. The agencies for the French Line, Austro-American Line, the Italian La Veloce steamship companies and Skliris's labour agency were one and the same in Salt Lake's Greek Town. This combination of labour supplier and steamship agent was lucrative for the Czar of the Greeks. In addition, Skliris had partnerships in company stores where immigrants were forced to trade or lose their jobs. He had one saving grace the Greeks admired – courage. Leaving his hotel quarters to face the gun of a Cretan whose job had been terminated two months after he had paid for it, with a new Greek arrival taking his place – a common practice of *padrones* – Skliris deftly disarmed him.¹⁵

Living off the labour of fellow Greeks, Skliris showed little interest in them. He had the Old-World, and particularly the Near-Eastern, contempt for those who worked with their hands. He would not deign to grant an audience to a worker. 'We never saw him,' a Cretan said. 'We had to deal with his men. Many of us didn't know what he looked like.'¹⁶ The practice of charging immigrants a three-dollar head tax, dangerous working conditions, and crowded, unsanitary housing were of no concern to Skliris and other agents, nor were they to management, which opened one mine after another, indifferent to where the men would sleep and eat. Tent towns called 'Rag Towns' sprang up, and men continued to build shacks out of blasting powder boxes on company land.

15. A full-page advertisement in the Salt Lake City Greek newspaper 'Ο Εργάτης, 7 April 1908, gives the same address of Skliris's office for the steamship lines agency. The anecdote is well known and has been told to the author by many people, including Paul Borovilos, George Zeese, Louis Lingos, and Mike Lingos.

16. Louis Lingos interview, 3 November 1973.

Management, from straw bosses to superintendents, was as extortionate of immigrants as were labour agents. American workers were neither under the *padrone* system nor were they forced to pay bribes to bosses. A Greek, writing to the manager of a coal company, said:

As for a fact, I state that on the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th of this month, I have only filled up eight coal cars, and am working in water. The reason that I have only so few cars is that the driver is not furnishing me enough cars because I have nothing to bribe him with or give anything. . . .¹⁷

A Greek from Neohorion, Phthiotis province, wrote:

I got a job at the Armour's packing house in Omaha for 2 or 3 hours a day at 23 cents an hour. Out of this sum five of us had to live. Fortunately, I thought, a labor agent offered us a job on a railroad 800 miles away; paying him \$8 a piece for commission, which we borrowed, and on a freight train we reached our destination but there was NO JOB, neither were we allowed to return unless we paid the transportation charges back to Omaha.

We worked at some farm for 50 cents a day for 19 days and paid our way back to Omaha. From Omaha I went to Castle Gate, Utah, where I was offered a job at the coke ovens, provided I paid \$20 commission for the boss and his gang. When I reported to work, as agreed, the agent told me that someone else had bid the job with \$10 more and since I had no more money I lost the job plus the \$20 commission. . . . Then . . . I got me a job at the recently started coal mine at Kenilworth. The first month check was \$32.50. I got fired from there because not having any money to spare, I refused to contribute towards buying a diamond ring for the superintendent's wife. (We had to please and pay everyone to hold our job.)¹⁸

17. Letter in Greek, signed by John Stefanakis, dated 9 December 1920; translation by Ernest K. Pappas, notary public. In files of Utah Historical Society.

18. James Galanis autobiographical sketch, Greek Archives, University of Utah.

Exploited by their labour agents and by mine, mill, and railroad bosses, the immigrants had even less protection than that given American workers because their pay scale was lower. There were no unions and no workmen's compensation laws. Only the outcries of immigrants compelled companies to pay small sums for injuries and deaths when they were glaringly at fault. The loss of a leg or arm was worth about three hundred dollars after which the maimed immigrant returned to Greece to live in privation.¹⁹ Companies blamed the immigrants' ignorance of the English language for the high accident rate, but the printing of safety precautions in foreign languages had no effect. When money was to be sent to survivors in Greece, company officials often allowed the labour agent, the adversary of the immigrants, to handle the transaction. A Skliris labour agent embittered hundreds of Greeks because it was found that he had never sent the money entrusted to him.

The deaths of the young, Maria Ekonomidou wrote, 'nourished the Minotaur of immigrant life'.²⁰ Mine and immigrant inspectors' reports recorded a litany of human destruction. On their pages Greek names stand out with the cause of death listed tersely: from the force of blasting powder, the rip of machinery, the fall of a roof of coal, the tipping of a cauldron of boiling ore, and explosions in mines. In coal mines alone during the immigrant era of 1900–40, 1,748 men of all nationalities were killed in explosions in the Intermountain West, the greater number in the first twenty-five years.²¹ Falls of roofs of coal and ore were by far the most common cause of single deaths in mines.

Greeks learned quickly of death and maiming in western America. They feared being carried to company doctors and accused them of amputating limbs without adequate attempts to

19. Ibid. (The writer signed a paper absolving the company of responsibility for his broken nose and was given a silver dollar.) Interview with Zack Tallas, 17 January 1964, whose brother lost a leg in the Utah Copper Mine. James Zeese, a cousin of the author's father, experienced the same loss and subsequent payment.

20. Ekonomidou, op. cit. p. 20.

21. H. B. Humphrey, *Historical Summary of Coal Mine Explosions in the United States 1810–1958* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 17, 22, 38–41. This figure includes New Mexico where many immigrant Greeks worked.

save them. Secretly they brought injured *patriotes* to *praktikoi* (folkhealers) for cure. A legendary Greek midwife in Utah was consulted by Intermountain immigrant men to set bones and for folk remedies to cure a wide variety of illnesses.²²

Steeped in oral tradition, Greeks did not keep journals of their odyssey. There is one known exception. He began with his departure from Thebes in 1912. His mother, he wrote, 'kissed me, embraced me, and gave me a handkerchief to remember her by and inside was a five drachma coin and a sprig of basil'. A few days after leaving Castle Garden, he was working on the rails of the Saint Louis–San Francisco line with three track gangs: Greek, Mexican, and Arab. On the second day of work, his village friend injured his hand. 'I almost fainted', he wrote, 'because two fingers were hanging by the skin.' Several weeks later as the gang was moving rails from one section of the line to another, a railroad car fell on a young Corinthian and crushed him. Shaken, the Theban left for Roseburg, Oregon, to work on another track gang. He and two other Greeks, riding a handcar through a torrential evening rainstorm, did not hear a locomotive speeding toward them. Ten yards away it emerged. They jumped, a split second from death.²³

Regularly young Greeks were buried in Death Wedding funerals (*Thanatogamoi*); each lay in a casket dressed as a bridegroom, often with wedding crown on his head, with a gold band on his finger, and a sprig of white flower in his lapel – as Greek custom decreed for the unmarried dead.²⁴ Before the long walk to the graveyard on the outskirts of town, a final picture for village relatives was taken. Surrounding the open casket were men dressed in their black Sunday suits – and at times a woman or two; at the head of the casket stood an old-country priest wearing the tall black *kalimafkion*, bearded, his hair knotted in the back.

Until churches were built in surrounding states, a succession of these bearded, black-robed priests from the Salt Lake City

22. Helen Z. Papanikolas, 'Magerou: The Greek Midwife', *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1970), 50–60.

23. H. K. Kambouris, *Σελίδαι ἐκ τοῦ βίου μου καὶ διάφορα ποιήματά μου ἀναγώρησις διὰ Ἀμερικὴν καὶ ἡ διαμονή μου ἐν Ἀμερικῇ*, Greek Archives, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

24. A custom traced to antiquity. See J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* (New York, 1964), pp. 545–62.

Holy Trinity Church travelled on railroad passes to industrial camps and towns in Wyoming, Montana, Nevada, Idaho, and Colorado to perform the liturgy for the dead.

After the obligatory picture-taking two men holding the Greek and American flags led the way to the graveyard, followed by six *patriotes*, the coffin resting on their shoulders, and then the Greek population of the area. Burial prayers were intoned at the open grave with someone among the immigrants who had helped a father or uncle in the altar of the homeland to swing the censer and chant the responses to the priest. The casket was lowered; each person present threw a handful of dirt onto it, and rocky earth was shovelled over. Into the mound a large black wooden cross was driven with the dead man's name in Greek painted in white across the arms.

Until women began coming to the Intermountain West, in numbers after 1912, the dead were buried without the keening of the *mirologhia* (words of fate). In an eastern Utah coal mine explosion of 1924 that killed 172 men, fifty of them Greek, gas and rubble hampered the rescue teams and ten days were required to bring up the dead. The widows' keening of the *mirologhia* came from the mine company houses throughout the ten days as one or two men were brought up at a time. A mass burial was held in a community hall because the Greek church could not hold all of the caskets.²⁵

Yet the young Greeks kept coming. It was the ancient poverty of their *patridha* that drove them westward. Workers in 1912 were receiving little more than one dollar a day in eastern factories, but men were making \$2.50 a day as muckers (diggers) and \$3.00 a day as miners in the copper mines of Utah and Nevada. To become a mucker and then a miner was the goal of Greeks whose starting wage was \$1.65 for a twelve-hour day.²⁶ The men took note of accidents and deaths by ascribing them to the fate, according to Greek folklore, allotted each man three days after birth.

Complicating the struggle to survive in the West were disputes

25. Papanikolas, *Toil and Rage in a New Land*, p. 177, photographs pp. 176, 178.

26. Dillingham report, Vol. III, p. 200. Greek workers in the smelting industries of the same period received \$1.75 per day: Bureau of Immigration, Labor and Statistics, *Report . . . 1911-1912*, p. 31.

that led Americans to stereotype the Greeks as wild, intractable people. In the face of American hostility, Greeks banded together in railroad cars and empty buildings to sustain each other during winter months when there was no work on railroads and in summer months when mine production slackened. They hid men from authorities during martial law at the risk of jail; twice in Utah they rushed to save a *patriotis* who was being dragged to a lynching.²⁷ Yet they also wrought chaos among themselves. Because the Greeks in the new country naturally continued their customs and cultural views, rooted in poverty, that judged a man's *filotimo*, men fought over slights to that honour. Life-long feuds sprang from marriage arrangements that went awry after the women reached America. Greek Towns divided into two enemy camps over the Royalist–Venizelos conflict, and lodge and Church politics increased dissensions in the new land. Elopements of mainland Greeks with Cretan women were accompanied by a justified fear of reprisal: the long-fought-for *enosis* – union of Crete with the mainland – did not include marriage for the fiercely chauvinistic Cretans.

A legendary quality quickly attached itself to feuds. A few hours after a Cretan killed a Skliris lieutenant and escaped from a mining town to make his way, eventually, to Crete, he was variously reported to have boarded a train posing as a doctor in Sunday suit and carrying a black bag, to have had his hair dyed red by accommodating prostitutes before leisurely leaving town, and to have hidden in the foothills for days.²⁸ These skirmishes were minor ones, however, compared with the labour wars that Greeks led in the first twenty-five years of the century.

27. Papanikolas, *Toil and Rage*, p. 155; Helen Zeese Papanikolas, 'The Greeks of Carbon County', *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXII (1954), 153–4.

28. For an account of incidents in a coal mining community that have become folklore, see Helen Z. Papanikolas, 'Greek Folklore of Carbon County', in *Lore of Faith and Folly*, ed. T. E. Cheney (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), pp. 61–77. For newspaper accounts of the killing of labour agent George Demetrakopoulos see the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 and 18 June 1908; *Eastern Utah Advocate* 18 and 25 June 1908. The 28 October 1908 issue of the *Eastern Utah Advocate* reported on a reward being offered by a Greek 'Black Hand' organization to murder two Greeks, one an interpreter who dictated the loss of a miner's job.

The initial role of Greeks as strike-breakers in the Intermountain West quickly metamorphosed into that of strikers. *Padrones* continued to recruit strike-breakers among unemployed Greeks with no industrial experience, but production suffered from inefficiency. Management fought to end strikes by branding workers as radicals, thereby obscuring their rights movement. Greek strikers, though, were not stirred by the crusading spirit of labour reform. Like other immigrant strikers, such as those involved in Pennsylvania's bitter anthracite strike of 1897, they worked under any kind of conditions as long as their pay was equal to that of fellow workers. They swung picks in poorly lighted underground tunnels, their feet in ice-encrusted water; they breathed black dust or the fine silt of ore that was ruining their lungs; and they timbered roofs and walls of mines too quickly because they were not paid for it. They accepted these circumstances as the necessary misery accompanying labour, believing their days of manual labour were temporary ones on the way to independence as respected businessmen.

Still, Greeks joined strikes and led them, even though they would lose wages committed to dowries and family mortgages and face the possibility of being blacklisted in mines throughout the area. Whenever they found that they were being paid less than Americans, or that they were being cheated on the weighing machines, or when they saw a chance for escape from paying bribes to *padrones*, the Greeks struck with a singlemindedness that astonished other workers and brought them abuse in newspapers and the contempt of Americans.²⁹

29. In the Utah copper strike of 1912, the Greeks were referred to in the 20 September issue of the *Deseret Evening News* as 'Cretan gunmen [who, with other immigrants] are dominant in a situation to which the "white" element has been forced against its will. Hundreds leave camp daily on every train . . . the two daily trains carry about 200 [a gross exaggeration] of the better element of the camp.'

During the Colorado coal strike of 1913–14, the *Trinidad* (Colorado) *Chronicle News* printed hearsay in every issue. The 13 November 1913 issue quoted a Greek as saying, 'The miners union is greater than the United States government and when the union gives the word to fire upon soldiers, we will obey the order.' The immigrants were stigmatized as anarchists. The 8 October 1914 *Denver Post* reported that the editor of *Il Risveglio*, a Denver Italian-language newspaper, wrote a letter of protest to the governor of Colorado objecting to a sheriff's remark that 'the Greeks and Italians were dangerous

Greeks participated in western shortlived strikes in the depression year of 1908, in 1909, and again in 1911 and 1912, in both mines and railyards. By the second decade of the century, many Greeks had left railroad gangs to become whackers in roundhouses, cleaning locomotives with caustic solutions. In the 1908 and 1911 Pocatello, Idaho, railyard strikes and again in the same area in 1922 (a strike that blacklisted Greeks and forced many to leave the state), the strikers were almost all from the Greek mainland. The unique characteristic of the big strikes in the coal and mineral mines in the Intermountain West, however, is that they were led by Cretans.

Greeks from Crete were ever ready to embroil themselves in labour strife, from small strikes such as the 1911 coal strike in Carbon County, Utah (the 'Greek War') in which two men were killed in an uprising of miners over being short-weighted at the scales, to the infamous Colorado strike of 1913–14 when seventy-two people were killed. The machine guns of management did not deter the Cretans.

Why were Cretans impatient to fight, more so than mainland Greeks? One reason is that Cretans remained longer in industrial work and had more years to experience labour abuses. They were also particularly resistant to the authority of mainlander labour agents and upheld and followed Cretan leaders as a point of honour. Greeks from the mainland early fulfilled their goal to satisfy family obligations, but the Balkan Wars and World War I interfered with their expected return to Greece. The establishment of families and communities replete with Greek churches, schools, and lodges and accommodation to American life with its myriad opportunities caused the brightness of the fatherland to recede.

anarchists'. The *Denver Post* of 30 October 1914 quoted the governor as saying the 'foreign element . . . had gone into the hills waving the red flag of anarchy . . .'. The *Trinidad Chronicle News* was hostile to the immigrants; the *Denver Post* often sympathetic.

An editorial in the 27 November 1907 *White Pine Daily News* of Ely, Nevada, said of the Greeks and Italians: 'Greed and grasp is all they know.'

The county newspapers reporting the Carbon County strike of 1922 were, except for the *Helper Times*, hostile to the Greeks. The 13 October *Price Sun* said ' . . . feeling is high in Spring Canyon with a bunch of red-blooded citizens out to clean up on disturbers'.

The Cretans, longer than any other Greeks, kept alive the idea of return to Greece and were wary of using their savings for American business ventures that would, they thought, be temporary. But most important, the Cretans were fresh from insurrections against the Turks. Although mainland Greeks sat in coffeehouses and boardinghouses and sang of eagles swooping up from battlefields with severed heads in their talons and of *klefts* waiting in mountain lairs to ambush Turks, these events were eighty years and more in the past for them. The Cretans, though, longer under Venetian rule, subjugated later by the Turks, had come to America directly from the revolts. Many of them brought, along with their amulet or vial of Cretan earth, photographs of themselves in *vraques*, cummerbunds, tasselled kerchiefs, bullet-studded bandoliers across their chests, and rifles, their 'lovely mistresses', at their sides.³⁰ There were men among them who had known Venizelos. They were contemporaries of Kazantzakis who had lived under, not merely heard of, crushing Turkish rule, who remembered the 'freakish half-mad' men and women of his neighbourhood and their 'fear of the Turks and their concern for their lives, honour, and possessions, which were in daily peril'.³¹ Like Kazantzakis, as boys many had been in massacres and seen the bodies of Cretans left swaying in the market place.

Added to poverty this instability of life sharpened Cretan honour to a fine sensitivity. They were of all Greeks quicker to avenge their *filotimo* and to perpetuate blood feuds – as Patrick Leigh Fermour has observed.³² Immigrants from the

30. From the famed Cretan guerrilla song:

Πότε θὰ κάνη ξαστεριά, πότε θὰ φλεβαρίση
νὰ πάρω τὸ ντουφέκι μου, τὴν ὀμορφὴ πατρώνα,
νὰ κατεβῶ στὸν Ὀμαλὸ στὴ στράτα τῶν μουσούρων
νὰ κάνω μάννες δίχως γυιούς, γυναῖκες δίχως ἄντρες.

When will the sky clear, when will it be February
To take my rifle, my lovely mistress,
To come down to Amalo, on the road to Mousoure,
To make mothers sonless, and wives widows.

31. N. Kazantzakis, *Report to Greco*, trans. P. A. Bien (New York, 1965), p. 60.

32. Roumeli: *Adventures in Northern Greece* (New York, 1962), pp. 126–44. Greeks from the Mani, south of Sparta, as celebrated for its militancy as Crete,

mainland were more inclined to file slander and assault suits against each other; Cretans were more prone to settle insults to *filotimo* with guns.

Although mainland Greeks were working with Cretans in 1911, they did not join the Utah 'Greek War'. The Cretans followed a battle tactic used in this and later strikes: they climbed the slopes of arid mountains taking with them whatever guns, blankets, and food they had and established themselves behind boulders. There was nothing extraordinary to be seen on the slopes, only boulders, sagebrush clumps, and a few juniper trees. Throughout the night the fires of strikers burned on the mountains surrounding the mining camp. There was no other sign of life until American miners walked toward the mine entrance in early morning to begin the day shift. 'A rock several hundred feet above the settlement burst into a roar of pistol and rifle fire. Bullets spattered about the miners from every direction. . . .'³³ Heavily armed mine guards returned fire and waited for the Cretans to use up their bullets, food and water. The strikers held out miraculously; fellow Cretans from the twenty or more mining camps in nearby canyons were crossing the mountains at night and bringing supplies.

The same strategy was used in big strikes: the 1912 copper strike in Bingham Canyon, Utah, the Colorado coal strike of 1913–14, and the Carbon County, Utah, coal strike of 1922. The labour wars revealed intrigue, acts of heroism and cowardice, foolhardiness, self-serving, and *filotimo*.

The Greeks, almost all of them Cretans, working in the copper mines of Utah in 1912 had been indifferent to the proselytizing of the Western Federation of Miners.³⁴ As the populace at large looked upon the unionists as 'Bolsheviks', 'Wobblies', and 'labour agitators', Greeks went to and from

did not come to the Intermountain West. Only one is recalled by elderly Greeks, Louis Maniates, who was killed by a rival gambler in Reno, Nevada.

33. A. K. Powell, 'A History of Labor Union Activity in the Eastern Utah Coal Fields: 1900–1934' (Ph.D. Diss., University of Utah, 1976), p. 161. Pages 160–8 give a good picture of the relationship among Cretans, mainland Greeks, and Charles Soter, Skliris's representative.

34. Helen Z. Papanikolas, 'Life and Labor Among the Immigrants of Bingham Canyon', *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII (1965), 289–315.

work with little interest in the then illegal, surreptitious campaign of labour leaders. Sitting in jail for idealistic future gains was incomprehensible to them and return to Crete was always in their thoughts. However, they soon saw the union as a means of removing their powerful labour agent Skliris. (They had attempted this three years earlier and, although not union members, had been supported by the Western Federation of Miners, who called Skliris the 'Greek slave driver and scab herder'. The Greeks had threatened Skliris after a Greek boy was killed by a mine guard for stealing coal during this minor strike.)³⁵

Making a pact with the federation, the Cretans agreed to join the union with the condition that the firing of Skliris be a demand in the coming strike. The Greeks were by far the greatest number of workers and the Western Federation enjoyed a phenomenal success; the two hundred and fifty members of July increased to nearly twenty-five hundred in October. When Union demands were refused, the Cretans jubilantly ran up and down the long winding street of the camp shooting off guns and terrorizing the community, an old country response to joy and danger.

Without notifying union officials of their plans, the Cretans took guns and blankets, climbed the mountainsides, fortified themselves in positions where they could see the entire narrow valley, and raked 'the mine workings with a hail of lead at every attempt of railroad employees or deputy sheriffs to enter the grounds'.³⁶ Union officials followed and tried to convince the Cretans to leave their strongholds, but as the *Salt Lake Herald Tribune* of 19 September 1912 said, the Cretans were 'famed as men who, when the spirit moves them to fight, are difficult to control'.

With deputies and national guardsmen at the foot of the slopes expecting the governor's command to charge and drive the Greeks down, it was discovered that sixty cases of dynamite were missing from a construction tunnel. The governor decided

35. V. H. Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations in the Non Ferrous Metals Industry up to 1930* (New York, 1930), pp. 262–3. *The Bingham Press Bulletin*, 29 November 1909, upheld the mine guard saying, 'The deluge of foreign riff-raff is sweeping over us. . . . These outlaws should be taught their place.'

36. *Deseret Evening News*, 19 September 1912.

instead to give the strikers an ultimatum to return to work and waited in the town theatre to talk with them. The Cretans remained on the slopes until the Salt Lake City priest in black robes, swinging silver pectoral cross, and *kalimafkion* on his head, climbed the mountainside. He went, the *Salt Lake Tribune* of 20 September 1912 said, 'among the militant strikers like the spirit of peace and brought "the truce of God"'. Everywhere guns were laid aside and hats doffed in respectful salute.' The men marched down the slopes and to the theatre. Yet with two hundred and fifty heavily fortified deputies at his disposal, Governor William Spry did not attempt to disarm the Cretans. To Governor Spry's insistence that the men return to work, the Cretans shook the theatre with shouts that they would go back at the same pay scale if the Czar of the Greeks was removed as their labour agent. When the copper company officials denied that Greeks had to pay to keep their jobs and defended Skliris, the Cretans angrily left the theatre for their mountain barricades.

Strike-breakers began infiltrating the town, despite the vigilance of strikers. Skliris, through Greek labour agents in Colorado and Idaho, was recruiting unemployed Greeks throughout the West to break the strike. The men were mainland Greeks; the animosity engendered at that time between them and the Cretan strikers was kept alive through the years when Utah Cretans supported Premier Venizelos and almost all other Greek immigrants upheld King Constantine. The factional split is still apparent today.

Although mine officials continued to defend Skliris as an honest man who was paid a salary for his services, the charges of his being a *padrone* began to have an effect on the public even though it was opposed to unions and viewed strikes as un-American. To counteract this, Skliris offered five thousand dollars for proof he charged men for jobs, the money to be used to erect a monument to Governor Frank Stuenenberg of Idaho, killed by a bomb in 1905 during mine labour wars. The offer was immediately accepted by the secretary of the Greek church in Salt Lake City. Two days later Skliris resigned. The Cretans celebrated in coffeehouses before going back to the mountains.

The strike continued; two Greeks were killed, one lost his leg, others were seriously wounded. (A Greek was also killed in McGill, Nevada, where Utah Copper Company miners had also

gone out on strike.) Through freezing winter months the strikers suffered from lack of food and fuel. The Western Federation of Miners in Butte, Montana, sent \$7,000 in relief, three dollars a week for single men and six dollars a week for family men.

The strike was lost leaving deprivation among strikers and an enormous economic loss to businesses and copper production. Skliris attempted to survive as a labour agent at a distance, but he never attained his former power. All labour agents had a brief, flamboyant career, cut short by the restrictive immigration laws of the early 1920s that kept desperate young Greeks in the homeland. The leading labour agents of the Intermountain West died penniless. Men who worked for Skliris and other *padrones* as a sideline, however, were the first successful Greeks, the source of money used to buy businesses and property now nearly forgotten. Labour agents were extortionists and opportunists, yet performed a service for great numbers of uneducated immigrants, afraid, conditioned by custom to believe that favours had to be given in return for work, hampered in a strange country by inability to speak its language, who knew neither where work was nor how to go about getting it.

After the expulsion of Skliris, newly arrived Greeks went through a harrowing time of scrounging for work for themselves and their *patriotes*. The journal-keeping Theban wandered nine months through the Northwest, borrowing a few dollars from friends to follow every rumour of work. On the way to yet another fruitless journey, he wrote:

Day and night I walk a strange land and despair
I am not able to live anymore in these strange places
I beg you, God, accept my wish
Send the Archangel to take my soul.³⁷

In the last months of the Utah copper strike, a coal strike began in the southern Colorado mines owned by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.³⁸ Again Cretans became leaders and from them

37. Kambouris journal, pp. 132–3.

38. For accounts of the strike see H. D. Graham and T. R. Gurr, *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Washington, D.C., 1969), pp. 254–6; *Colorado, Ludlow, Report of the Special Board . . .* (Denver, 1914); G. S.

came a heroic martyr. Louis Tikas had been born near Rethymnon, Crete, and had arrived in America in 1906. As a coffeehouse owner in Denver, Colorado, he was known for befriending countrymen needing shelter, or as someone to speak with American officials for them or to write letters to their villages. Greeks entrusted him with their wages as they moved from section gangs to mines and mills: new immigrants were reluctant to use American banks.³⁹ Tikas became an interpreter and then an organizer in the northern Colorado coal mines.

When the United Mine Workers called the strike on 23 September 1913, hundreds of miners were evicted from company houses. They loaded children, rickety furniture, straw bedding, and cooking utensils into wagons and with early snow falling made their way down the muddy roads of Delagua and Berwind canyons. Many miners pulled top-heavy carts. Eight to ten thousand miners followed into the tent towns put up by the union, the largest of which was Ludlow.

Labour leaders were faced with a large contingent of Greek miners, recently arrived from Crete, who could not understand English. Tikas was brought in to organize the Greeks and became their spokesman. A report to the governor of Colorado said:

The most forceful portion of the colonists were Greeks. We do not know that they outnumbered the other nationalities in the colony, but we are positive that they dominated it. The

McGovern and L. F. Guttridge, *The Great Coal Field War* (Boston, 1972); B. B. Beshoar, *Out of the Depths: The Story of John R. Lawson, A Labor Leader* (Denver, 1958).

39. Interviews conducted by Zeese Papanikolas with survivors of the strike and men who knew Tikas include: Mike Livoda, Denver, Colorado, 27 August 1973; John Tsanakatsis, Oak Creek, Colorado, 29 August 1973; Gus Papadakis, Oak Creek, Colorado, 29 August 1973, 24 July 1974, 1 August 1974, and Hania, Crete, 30 May 1975; Mike Lingos, Price, Utah, 23 July 1973; Mary T. O'Neal, Hollywood, California, 4 April 1974; Peter Loulos, Chicago, Illinois, 4 April 1974; Louis R. Dold, photographer, whose pictures of the strike are filed with the Colorado Historical Society, San Francisco, California, 27 July 1974, 17 August 1974, and 12 October 1974. All interviews are tape-recorded, except for that of Mike Livoda, and in the interviewer's possession. A tape-recorded interview of Livoda by Joseph Stipanovich, 20 June 1973, is on file at the American West Center, University of Utah.

will of the Greeks was the law of the colony. They were the most aggressive element, the fighting men. . . . Such was their position and authority that although many of the nations had leaders of their own, the Greek leader was the master of the tented city.⁴⁰

Clashes of militia and national guardsmen with strikers continued throughout the winter in the mining camps surrounding Trinidad, Colorado, killing guards, strikers, and children. The Cretans were acknowledged for their cunning. As some of them had come from the Balkan Wars, rumours spread that their strategy had been learned on the battlefield and that they had brought a good supply of Greek-made bullets.

On 20 April 1914, one day after Greek Easter (Julian Calendar), when Tikas and his Greeks barbecued lambs bought at neighbouring ranches, danced old native folk dances, several of the men in Cretan *vrakes*, the Colorado National Guard began its big offensive. The guard said later that the day was chosen because word had come that the Greeks were planning an attack as part of their celebration. Cretans maintained that the soldiers expected the Greeks to be dazed from drinking wine and unprepared for attack.

In the early morning, guardsmen fired on the Ludlow tent colony killing five men and a boy. The strikers ran to their stations and began firing across the road at the soldiers. In many of the tents holes had been dug and covered over with planks as hiding places for women and children during gunfire. Tikas tried throughout the day to lead shocked women and children to a deep, dry river bed for safety. By afternoon he was able to bring small groups to the *arroyo*, while the noise of strikers' bullets and the guard's machine guns increased and came closer.

The tents were set on fire; two women and eleven children hiding in the dugouts suffocated. Tikas saw the impossibility of getting all women and children to the river bed, raised a white cloth of truce, and approached a national guard officer who broke a rifle over his head. Tikas was pushed into the crossfire of strikers and guardsmen and fell, riddled with bullets, to become known as the 'Martyr of Ludlow'.

40. Ludlow, *Report of the Special Board* . . . , p. 7.

In a matter of hours, coffeehouses in the West heard of his murder and, whether they knew him or not, Cretans from Raton, New Mexico, forty miles away, walked over the mountains carrying rifles and ammunition, and Greeks from Colorado Springs slung flour sacks filled with ammunition over their shoulders, tied red bandana kerchiefs around their necks as a sign of revolt, and set out to avenge their countryman.⁴¹

Other Greeks, however, saw an opportunity for personal advantage in the disarray following Skliris's loss of authority in the copper strike. A Greek shoe repairman from Trinidad travelled to Bingham Canyon, Utah, and recruited strike-breakers from among the Cretan strikers, then blacklisted throughout the Intermountain mining towns. There was also a scramble among several Greeks at the death of Tikas to become the spokesman for their people. The shoe repairman had his shop hacked up by Cretan strikers, and a self-styled successor to Tikas did not have the charisma and altruism to be acclaimed by the Cretans.

Tikas was eulogized in newspapers and by people of the working class, his Greek village background supplanted by ancient Greek heritage: 'Who knows what blood flowed in his veins? Perhaps the blood of Pericles.'⁴² Tikas's name is at the top of a list engraved on a monument erected by the United Mine Workers in memory of those who died at Ludlow. On each anniversary of the attack he is recalled as the hero of the massacre. Yet a letter written by him, in the files of the United Mine Workers national headquarters in Washington, D.C., shows he had trouble with union officials who resented his leadership.⁴³

The few Greeks who joined unions for ideological reasons were unmarried and almost everyone of them remained so. They had been indoctrinated by men who were not Greek. A survivor of the Colorado strike of 1913–14, said, 'A Black working next to me converted me to the union. Only a few of us Greeks believed in the union from the beginning. The others joined when Tikas became the leader.'⁴⁴

41. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 April 1914.

42. *United Mine Workers Journal*, 28 May 1914.

43. Addressed to United Mine Workers officials, 10 February 1914.

44. Gus Papadakis interview.

The need of unions to have Greeks within their ranks for strength paralleled the need of industry for their cheap labour, but in neither unions nor work did the Greeks find full equality. Their difficulties increased during the World War I years when, still expecting to return to Greece, they were initially reluctant to serve in the American army. The anti-immigrant campaigns during the war years and those following with the American Legion leading a feverish drive to keep immigrants from the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Mediterranean out of the country were fuelled with increased propaganda against the millions of dollars sent back to their countries by the immigrants, their faltering in enlisting in the war, and their 'un-Americanism' in joining strikes. The increasing numbers of Greeks leaving labour to become businessmen were harassed.⁴⁵

When miners in the Intermountain West joined the national coal strike of 1922, outcries against immigrants reached an apogee. Again the focus of the strike was in the coal fields of eastern Utah. Again Cretans were leaders of the tent colonies and short-weighting on the coal scales the catalyst for their striking. The initial impetus for the strike was a cut in wages while coal prices remained steady. After ambushing a train rumoured to be carrying strike-breakers, miners were forced out of company houses and into the union's tent colonies. A confrontation in an orchard between a deputy sheriff and a Cretan named Tenas left the striker dead and his *patriotes* vociferously charging that he had been unarmed. The casket was escorted to the graveyard with two men at the head of the procession holding large Greek and American flags, followed by

45. Emily G. Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens* (New York, 1969), Appendix, p. 472, shows that Greeks led all other immigrants in remittances to their native countries. The methods used in harassments were: denying business licences; accusing men of having been 'strike agitators' and therefore un-American; in Carbon County, Utah, refusing American citizenship applications for five years to Greeks who balked at enlisting in WWI; and by openly resisting attempts of Greeks to establish themselves in business. This resistance began as soon as Greeks left the labour ranks to enter business. The *Great Falls* (Mont.) *Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1908, published accounts of mass meetings to 'consider ridding Great Falls of undesirables. . . . Greeks have located in this city and invested money in business blocks, restaurants and other small business enterprises. . . . The Resolution provided that a committee be appointed to confer with the Greeks and induce them to leave the city.' The *Standard* (Ogden, Utah), 9 April 1909, voiced similar feelings.

seven hundred Greeks carrying small blue and white Greek flags. A newspaper account accused the Greeks of dragging the American flag in the dust and Americans watching on the sidewalks said it had been set on fire. The Greeks denied the flag had been desecrated.⁴⁶

In a second ambush on a train entering the county, a sheriff was killed and an engineer injured. A badly wounded Cretan was captured by guards, then rescued by friends who carried him to a doctor. The guns in the strikers' belts convinced the doctor that it was expedient to give emergency treatment. The man's compatriots hid him in one remote town after another until he recovered. Searching for him, the national guard rampaged through Greek stores and boardinghouses.

Fourteen Cretans and an Italian were arrested for the death of the sheriff. After long, turbulent trials three were acquitted, the rest sentenced to terms up to life imprisonment. 'A vicious element', the 30 June 1922 issue of the *Sun* (Price, Utah) said of the Greeks, 'unfit for citizenship'. All Greeks were included: strikers, non-strikers, cardplayers, businessmen, and second-generation children. The Greek vice-consul, who several years previously as a Greek-language newspaper reporter in Salt Lake City had exposed a Greek posing as a banker and bilking Greek labourers of interest on their savings, was arrested when he tried to enter a mining town to speak with Cretan strikers. His diplomatic immunity was cavalierly disregarded by the national guard.

A rival county newspaper complained that of the three thousand Greeks in the area, only one hundred were married.⁴⁷ The presence of thousands of single Greek men in western towns had been alarming to the native population from their initial appearance. An official report on Ludlow said, 'The strange thing, and one that we found important is that there were no Greek women or children in the colony.'⁴⁸ In Utah and

46. *News Advocate* (Price, Utah), 18 May 1922. Almost a quarter century after the strike, men involved admitted to the author that Tenas armed himself in preparation for confronting the deputy whose car had broken down a mile from the Helper, Utah, tent colony and that a 'hot head' had set fire to the flag before others could restrain him. See Papanikolas, *Toil and Rage*, pp. 167–75 for an account of the strike.

47. *News Advocate*, 13 July 1922.

48. Ludlow, *Report of the Special Board* . . . , p. 7.

surrounding areas where Mormon influence was strong, northern-European converts most often came in family groups, giving a sense of stability.

Assault cases in which Greeks had taken revenge for disparagements on their origins were commonplace and fights between 'white men's camps' and 'foreigners' camps' were widely reported with Greeks accorded blame. In a McGill, Nevada, mêlée that killed three Greeks, eighty-seven compatriots were loaded into two boxcars and taken into a desert where they were forced out with neither food nor water.⁴⁹

Fears for the virtue of American girls were ever present. The Greeks would not confine themselves to their Greek Towns, and the well-dressed gamblers and 'interpreters' among them stigmatized their entire hard-working population. Americans imposed restrictions: in Pocatello, Idaho, Greeks were forced to sit in theatre balconies and in many western towns real estate clauses prohibited them from owning property in what were considered select neighbourhoods.⁵⁰

With a number of Greek men marrying Americans, establishing themselves in business, their 'unassimilability' judged by coffeehouses, Greek schools, Greek language newspapers, and their 'clannishness' in living near each other, the groundwork for the Ku Klux Klan attacks against immigrants in 1924 and 1925 was laid. Klansmen in hoods and robes marched down city and town streets, burned crosses, threatened Greek men who employed American women and stormed through their establishments. In a Utah mill town hooded Klansmen entered a store owned by a young Greek

49. *White Pine News* (Ely, Nev.), 2 June 1908.

50. The author's parents and other Greeks in Pocatello, Idaho, would not attend theatres because of this restriction. In the mill town of Magna, Utah, the owner of the company store built himself a house on prime land he owned, but was forced to mortgage it to the Greek owners of the Central Lumber and Hardware Company as collateral for building materials needed to finish the structure. A subsequent reading of the abstract revealed that Greeks were not allowed to buy land on his property. Mary P. Lines recalls her father Gust Pappas appearing before the Price, Utah, city council to plead the case of a fellow Greek, a World War I American army veteran, who had earlier been denied the right to purchase city land. 'You see this man's dark face, but the scar on it came from fighting for this glorious country.' Similar stories are part of the immigrant experience of almost every first-generation Greek the author has interviewed.

engaged to an American and read him the Klan articles of incorporation, adding one which refused Greeks the right to marry American women. The man and woman eloped and returned to find crosses burning in front of his store and another in the yard of his wife's parents.⁵¹

Nine years after the solidarity of immigrants subdued the Klan, in the depths of the Great Depression, another national coal strike paralysed coal production. This time Cretans were not leaders. By then, they had wives and children and Greek responsibility to the family took precedence over earlier, freer behaviour. There were also fewer of them in the Intermountain West. Like the mainlanders, they had not returned to the homeland as they had intended. A few took their savings in the depressed thirties and left for Crete, but most were fearful to return in the economic uncertainty of the times.

The population of Greeks in the area dwindled and was not replenished because of immigration restriction. With their savings Greeks settled elsewhere, some to become prosperous. Once-active churches are either closed, like that in McGill, Nevada, or are little more than chapels: Great Falls, Montana, and Pueblo, Colorado. A good number of the immigrants never married; inured to a wholly male life, they existed on the fringes of Greek life, living in run-down hotels, their final days spent in coffeehouses, which decreased in number as the men died off.⁵² They remind one of Cavafy's lines:

. . . By heavy labour there outworn
He was destroyed by suffering and cheap debauchery⁵³

The interplay of the industrialization of the Intermountain West and the lives of Greek immigrants is seen to be symbiotic: immigrants provided the brawn for mines, railroads, mills, and smelters while industry in turn provided wages with which the immigrants established themselves in America. The

51. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Dallas, 26 June 1972.

52. A study on the last of coffeehouse habitués is J. Patterson's 'The Unassimilated Greeks of Denver', *Anthropological Quarterly*, XLIII (1970), 243–53.

53. C. P. Cavafy, 'Days of 1909, 1910, and 1911', *The Poems of C. P. Cavafy*, trans., John Mavrogordato (London, 1952), p. 140.

participation of Greeks in the early twentieth century labour wars contributed to the breakdown of resistance to unionization that led to the Wagner Act of 1933. This participation added an additional burden to the discrimination experienced by second-generation Greek ethnics.

Like millions of other hardy immigrants, the Greeks persevered. The greater number lived through the hard days of early immigrant life, married, had children, became store owners, sheepmen, and cattlemen, and moved out of the Greek Towns in the prosperity of the middle twenties. A rustic people, they saw the promise of America vested in their children, who finished grammar schools, high schools, many going on to colleges and universities and often to graduate schools, with their Greek ethnicity engrained in them. Their grandchildren are as American as any third generation immigrant people, but highly conscious of their Greek roots. In the final assessment the industrial American West, with its early horrors in living and in dying, did give to thousands of immigrant Greeks a foothold in American life.

Salt Lake City, Utah